GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:553
ANSWERED ON:08.07.2009
REHABILITATION OF TAMIL CIVILIANS IN SRI LANKA
Baalu Thiru Thalikkottai Rajuthevar;Das Gupta Shri Gurudas;Karunakaran Shri P.;Lingam Shri P.;Sugavanam Shri E.G.

Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any relief/assistance has been extended or being extended by the Government of India to the Government of Sri Lanka for the rehabilitation of war displaced Tamil civilians in their country;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the manner in which such relief/assistance is extended/being extended to them; and

(d) the steps taken/being taken by the Government of India to achieve a political solution of the ethnic problem in Sri Lanka?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS(SHRI S.M. KRISHNA)

(a) to (d) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (A) TO (D) OF LOK SABHA UNSTARRED QUESTION NO.553 REGARDING "REHABILITATION OF TAMIL CIVILIANS IN SRI LANKA"

The Government of India has provided extensive humanitarian assistance to Sri Lanka for Tamil civilians affected by the conflict. This assistance includes food, medicines and other essential supplies and an emergency field hospital that has been in operation since March this year. Prime Minister has announced Rs. 500 crores for the relief and rehabilitation of the internally displaced persons in Sri Lanka on June 9, 2009.

Assistance that has already been dispatched includes 1.7 lakh family relief packs from Tamil Nadu containing essential items like dry rations, personal hygeine items, clothing, etc and two consignments of medical supplies to the Government of Sri Lanka to meet the needs of the IDPs. An Indian field hospital has been functioning since March 2009 in Northern Sri Lanka.

In addition, more assistance is being organised by the Government for relief and rehabilitation of Tamil Civilians in Sri Lanka. India is sending 2600 tons of galvanized corrugated steel sheets to Sri Lanka to construct shelter for approximately 5000 families living in relief camps in Northern Sri Lanka. In order to speed up the process of rehabilitation and return of the IDPs to their original homes, four Indian de-mining teams will be deployed by the Government in Northern Sri Lanka. Another consignment of family relief packs will be shortly dispatched from Tamil Nadu.

The Government is of the view that the conclusion of the military operations in Sri Lanka provides an opportunity to make a new beginning and pursue a lasting political settlement in Sri Lanka. The way forward lies in a peacefully negotiated political settlement within the framework of a united Sri Lanka, acceptable to all the communities in Sri Lanka including the Tamils. The National Security Advisor Shri M K Narayanan and Foreign Secretary Shri Shivshankar Menon visited Colombo on May 20-21, 2009 and held talks with the Sri Lankan Government. The necessity of reaching a political settlement was emphasized. On June 24, 2009, a high-level Sri Lankan delegation led by Hon`ble Basil Rajapaksa, Senior Adviser to the Sri Lankan President, visited India to continue bilateral discussions.Government continues to stay engaged with the Government of Sri Lanka in this regard.